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Proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001

Review of resource requirements for the High-Level Intergovernmental Event for Financing for Development and the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries

Note by the Secretary-General

1. The General Assembly, in paragraph 104, section IV, of its resolution 54/249 of 23 December 1999, on questions relating to the programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999, requested the Secretary-General to review, as a matter of priority, resource requirements for the high-level intergovernmental event on financing for development, and the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, and to submit a report to the General Assembly for consideration at its resumed fifty-fourth session.

2. Resource requirements for the high-level intergovernmental event cannot as yet be assessed, pending the outcome of the consultations with institutional and other "stakeholders" (including on the possibility of utilizing staff from these stakeholders in the secretariat of the event), that the Secretary-General and, subsequently, the Bureau of the Preparatory Committee are to undertake in accordance with paragraphs 7, 10 and 17 of resolution 54/196 of 22 December 1999, and also pending consideration by the Preparatory Committee of issues relating to the organization of the event, its agenda and related questions referred to in paragraph 11 of that resolution. The Secretary-General will thus revert to the matter when these issues are clarified.[1] Meanwhile, the present report deals with the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries.

3. The General Assembly decision concerning the framework for the preparatory process and the holding of the Third United Nations Conference on the Least

[1] A preliminary report on "Consultations on the potential modalities of the participation of all relevant stakeholders in both the substantive preparatory process and the high-level intergovernmental event on financing for development" is contained in document A/AC.257/1.

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Developed Countries is contained in its resolution 54/235 of 23 December 1999. In adopting that resolution, the General Assembly also approved additional resources of $646,400 over and above the resources included in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000–2001 (see A/54/693). Of this amount, $616,400 were approved under section 11A, Trade and development (in order, in particular, to strengthen the Office of the Special Coordinator for Least Developed, Landlocked and Island Developing Countries in providing substantive services to the preparatory process and the Conference itself) and $30,000 under section 26, Public information (for dissemination of information on the conference and its outcome in local languages).

4. In paragraph 14 of resolution 54/235, the Assembly decided to defray the cost of participation of two government representatives from each least developed country in the meetings of the Preparatory Committee and the Conference itself through the use of extrabudgetary resources and, should those measures prove to be insufficient, requested the Secretary-General to consider all other options, including the use of unspent balances from the regular budget for the biennium 1996-1997.

5. The cost of the participation of two government representatives from each least developed country at the two sessions of the Preparatory Committee and the Conference itself is intended to be met from extrabudgetary resources. These costs amount to $1,164,500 for the two sessions of the preparatory committee and to $500,500 for the Conference itself. In the statement on the programme budget implications of resolution 54/235, contained in document A/C.5/54/43, it was suggested that, should extrabudgetary resources be insufficient, the Secretary-General would be authorized to use, in the first instance, the remaining portion of the resources approved by the General Assembly in paragraph 2 of its resolution 53/3 of 12 October 1998.

6. The Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) addressed a note verbale to all States members of UNCTAD on 14 February 2000, inviting them to consider providing, through voluntary contributions, resources to defray the costs of participation of government representatives in the meetings of the preparatory committee and the Conference itself. The note requested States members of UNCTAD to indicate their likely response to this appeal by 6 March 2000, in order for the General Assembly to be informed of the outcome of the appeal at its resumed fifty-fourth session.

7. It is recalled that the General Assembly adopted resolution 54/235 and approved the related additional resources on the basis of an agreed understanding among delegations of the Second Committee of the Assembly. This understanding was spelled out in a statement read by the Chairman of the Second Committee at the time when the Committee adopted the resolution in draft form (A/C.2/54/L.73). That statement, reflected in document A/C.2/54/SR.49, indicated that, should the additional resources approved by the General Assembly ($646,400) prove to be insufficient to enable UNCTAD to implement the requirements of paragraphs 2, 4, 5 and 15 of draft resolution A/C.2/54/L.73, the Secretary-General may bring this situation to the attention of the General Assembly at its fifty-fifth session and submit appropriate proposals for consideration by the General Assembly at that session.

8. In the light of the foregoing, the Secretariat will make an oral presentation to the Fifth Committee at the first resumed fifty-fourth session of the General

Assembly on the response of Member States to the above-mentioned note verbale. The first session of the Preparatory Committee, which will be held in July 2000, will require an amount of $582,000 to defray the costs of the participation of representatives of the least developed countries at that session.

9. Should there continue to be a shortfall in the availability of extrabudgetary resources for the participation of representatives of the least developed countries at the second session of the Preparatory Committee and the Conference itself, the Secretary-General would bring that situation to the attention of the General Assembly at its fifty-fifth session for appropriate action, together with any other additional requirements which may be considered necessary to enable UNCTAD to provide full substantive support to the preparatory process and the Conference itself.